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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT,
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2004

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEALS

Killers of Turkish truck driver 'familiar' - Aksam
8 captives killed in Iraq in 4 months - Aksam
Zarkawi allegedly hides in Iran - Sabah
Orange alert based on 'canned' intelligence - Hurriyet
Orange 'fiasco' - Aksam
Three-year 'delayed' alert - Milliyet
South Koreans protest sending troops to Iraq - Sabah
France 5 TV: Turkey is Islam's 'Trojan Horse' - Sabah

OPINION MAKERS

Turks involved in killing of Turkish truck driver - Radikal
Turkey 'helpless,' US 'indifferent' on security in Iraq -
Radikal
HRW warns of looming conflict in northern Iraq - Cumhuriyet
Al-Qaeda threatens Europe - Cumhuriyet
US went on Orange alert based on 'old' information - Zaman
Orange alert scandal in US - Yeni Safak
Howard Dean: Bush uses terror as a 'pretext' - Cumhuriyet
Humanitarian tragedy on Gaza-Egypt border - Yeni Safak
Statue of Liberty opened to visitors - Cumhuriyet

BRIEFING

MFA moves on Turks abducted in Iraq: The Foreign Ministry sent a declaration made by a major Turkish transporters' organization (UND) to halt operations in Iraq to Arabic television channels al-Arabiya and al-Jazeera in an effort to gain the release of the remaining Turkish hostages in Iraq. On Tuesday, Foreign Ministry and Foreign Trade officials held a meeting with Turkish companies working in Iraq. The MFA advised the companies not to go past Mosul in making deliveries in Iraq. The MFA also contacted US forces in Iraq, the new Iraqi Administration, and local tribal leaders in an effort to secure the release of other Turkish workers abducted by Iraqi militants. Television and radio reports late Wednesday morning claimed that two more Turkish hostages had been freed by their captors and would return to Turkey on Thursday. The reports note that at least one more Turkish worker, a colleague of the murdered Murat Yuce, is still being held. Turkish papers speculate that three Turks with ties to Al-Qaeda (Habib Aktas, Gurcan Bac and Azad Ekinici) who staged car bomb attacks in Istanbul last November may have been involved in the killing of a Turkish driver in Baghdad on Monday. The number of Turkish trucks going into Iraq through the Habur border crossing fell to 1,400 yesterday from a normal level of 2,000 the day before. Ankara has become 'helpless' in the face of US 'indifference' regarding security in the region, "Radikal" claims. Turkey, a crucial logistical base for US forces in Iraq, was aiming to increase trade with Iraq to \$2 billion this year, "Radikal" notes. A commentary in the daily "Vatan" views the killing of a Turkish truck driver by groups linked to al-Zarkawi men as an indication of an Al-Qaeda presence in Turkey. "Vatan" claims that some Turkish nationals have gone to Iraq to join the insurgents. The commentary argues that Al-Qaeda cannot be regarded sincere in 'regretting' the death of innocent civilians while 'ruthlessly' killing foreigners working in Iraq. The paper expects Al-Qaeda to continue its attacks against Turks in Iraq, and warns of possible new, 'spectacular' attacks in Turkey.

U.S. Soldier Reportedly Arrested Entering Turkey from Iraq: A front-page story in "Hurriyet" claims that a U.S. soldier was arrested when authorities at the Habur border crossing from Iraq found that he was carrying several rounds of ammunition and other military supplies. Following an initial interrogation, the soldier was brought before a judge, who ordered his arrest. The soldier is reportedly being held in a prison in the border town of Silopi. The US

Embassy issued a statement to the press on Wednesday afternoon refuting claims that a US soldier had been arrested.

Erdogan on Middle East, global terror, Iraq: Turkish papers report on the second part of PM Erdogan's interview with the German daily "Bild." "For centuries," Erdogan said, "Turkey has shown that Jews and Muslims can live together in peace." "Turkey has a particular responsibility in contributing to efforts to find peace in the Middle East," he added, asserting that "Turkey wants peace in the Middle East." "We want an end to guerrilla war and terrorism in the region," Erdogan continued, noting that "Turkey has a particular responsibility to take care in its relations with Israel." "Terror is not only Turkey's problem," the PM asserted, "but a problem for the world." He noted that "even the Pentagon, one of the best-protected buildings in the world, faced an attack by terrorists." Erdogan called on nations of the world to launch a "joint struggle against terror." On the US-led coalition's war with Iraq, Erdogan said that the "crucial" evidence in the view of the international community had been claims about the development of WMD by the former regime in Baghdad. "But no proof has been found regarding the existence of WMD in Iraq," Erdogan noted. "It is a difficult situation for Turkey, because the war in Iraq is on our border," he added. "However," he concluded, "we are happy that Iraq has been fully disarmed."

Iraqi leaders to visit Turkey: Iraq's President Gazi al-Yawar plans to visit Turkey during the last week in August before setting off on a tour of European capitals, papers report. Iraqi PM Iyad Allawi will make his first official visit to Turkey during the first week of September.

HRW report on northern Iraq: Turkish dailies carry a recent report by Human Rights Watch (HRW) that the new Iraqi government has failed to resolve the property rights dispute between the ethnic groups in northern Iraq, thus opening the way for violence in the region in the near future. The 78-page report documents the increasing frustration of thousands of displaced Kurds, Turkomen, and Assyrians who are living in desperate conditions as they await a resolution of their property claims. The US-led Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) failed to address the rising tensions in northern Iraq and to implement a strategy to resolve the claims of the different communities there, HRW alleges. Iraq's interim government urgently needs to implement a judicial system to resolve these disputes, which stem from decades of "Arabization" policies that uprooted hundreds of thousands of Kurds and other non-Arabs, the report warns. Since April 2003, thousands of displaced Kurds, Turkomen and others have returned to Kirkuk and other "Arabized" regions to reclaim their lands. These returnees were forcibly expelled from their homes by Saddam Hussein during the 1980s and 1990s. The process of seeking redress for the displaced Kurds and others must not lead to new injustices against Arab settlers, HRW warned. HRW called on Kurdish political leaders to coordinate their efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to displaced families who have already returned to reclaim property, and to discourage further returns until property claims are processed. Since a census in October this year will determine which ethnic group will control Kirkuk, Kurds are reportedly rushing back to the oil-rich town. Kurds are flocking back to Kirkuk, HRW said, but the city has little capacity to absorb them.

MFA describes Nagorno-Karabakh poll as "illegitimate": MFA Spokesman Namik Tan said on Tuesday that municipal elections planned to be held in the Armenian-occupied region of upper Karabakh would be "illegitimate." Tan said that Turkey supports a peaceful solution to the long-standing dispute within the framework of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Turk Killed in Iraq/ US Terror Alert

"Leaving Iraq is not a solution"
Erdal Safak commented in the mass appeal "Sabah" (8/4): "The murder of a Turkish citizen by Iraqi terrorists linked to Al-Qaeda brings up two important but overlooked issues: The first is the failure of US forces in Iraq fulfill their commitment to provide escorts for Turkish trucks. The second is the failure of the Turkish Foreign Ministry to take action against such negligence. Concerned parties, including the Turkish-Iraqi Business Council, have been screaming about the lack of proper protection for Turkish workers in Iraq, yet their voice somehow did not reach influential circles and cause them to take action. ... Let's hope this time we will see effective measures taken on the security issue, because business with Iraq is extremely important for the Turkish economy. There might be some interim solutions for the sake of keeping up the daily routine, but it is important that the US and Iraqi authorities be compelled to take proper action on security."

"Is there zero-risk area?"

Sami Kohen wrote in the mass appeal "Milliyet" (8/4): "Trade with Iraq is an important source of revenue for the Turkish economy, and the transportation industry is a large part of this. However, the recent incident proves that Turkey should first be thinking about providing enough security protection for its own citizens. There are a series of efforts within the Turkish state mechanism, including the MFA, to implement measures that would ensure secure trade. Such efforts also cover attempts to compel US and Iraqi authorities to take actions to ensure proper protection. Nevertheless, trade with Iraq -- and particularly the transportation business -- cannot be completely risk-free as long as terrorist organizations continue to operate freely there. This does not mean, however, that we must give in to the terrorists."

"Terror alert in the US"

Zafer Atay wrote in the economic-political "Dunya" (8/4): "It looks like US intelligence agencies have taken a lesson from the 9/11 investigation reports, and that they are now more careful and cooperative with each other. The elevation of the US terror alert not only enhances coordination between security units and the military, but also gives local administrations the authority to implement certain security measures. ... In the event of a terrorist attack in the US carried out by Al-Qaeda, we might expect a difficult time for Arabs and other Muslim minorities living in the US. The terror paranoia has become so great that it can easily be used to limit human rights, freedom, and the rule of law."

DEUTSCH